

Evaluation of the Missouri Teacher Recruitment and Retention Grants Phase I Report – Executive Summary

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Prepared for:



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CTAC's staff is comprised of nationally recognized executives, educators, policy makers, researchers and organizers who have extensive experience working with city, county and state agencies, educational institutions, federal legislative bodies, not-for-profit organizations, philanthropic institutions and the private sector.

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Through the Teacher Recruitment and Retention Grants, the Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) is supporting local education agencies (LEAs), educator preparation programs (EPPs), and community colleges (CCs) across the state to recruit and retain teachers. DESE's goal is to create an exemplary state system of educator recruitment and retention.

The Community Training and Assistance Center (CTAC) is conducting an independent, external evaluation of the teacher recruitment and retention grants. This report presents findings of the first phase of the evaluation – Analysis of Applications. The data included responses to a number of Likert-scale survey prompts and answers to multiple open-ended questions. In addition, CTAC reviewed multiple guidance documents from DESE.

This Phase I evaluative report focuses on building a baseline understanding of the strategies selected by grantees for the recruitment and retention of teachers.

The following questions guide the evaluation:

- What strategies are proposed for improving teacher recruitment?
- What strategies are proposed for improving teacher retention?
- How will the grantees measure the impact of their initiatives? What mechanisms for evaluation are they selecting?

Findings

LEA Teacher Recruitment (Grow Your Own) Grants

- More than half of LEA teacher recruitment grantees are engaging in partnerships with institutions of higher education (IHEs) for teacher recruitment.
- They plan to use a variety of strategies for teacher recruitment and selection, including hosting or participating in informational events at LEA schools or EPP/CC campuses and using multiple communication materials to promote the teaching profession.
- They intend to utilize multiple strategies for teacher preparation and support, including inviting students to participate in teaching clubs or academies, providing students with scholarships for tuition or room and board, and encouraging non-teaching staff to become certified, or teachers to earn higher degrees or certifications in high-need areas.
- More than one-third of LEAs indicate their plans include strategies for increasing teacher candidate diversity. Among these LEAs, the majority are targeting both male candidates and candidates of color.
- LEAs plan to use a variety of strategies to increase teacher candidate diversity. Some are specific to creating a diverse pool of candidates; others are more general.

LEA Teacher Retention Grants

- LEAs indicate that teacher vacancies at the end of the 2020–21 school year were somewhat higher than usual.
- Three-fourths of LEAs report it is somewhat difficult or very difficult to fill the vacant teacher positions.
- Across LEA priority levels, locations, and sizes, the percentage of male teachers is lower than that of male students. Some LEAs indicate that the percentage of teachers of color is lower than the percentage of students of color.
- Ninety percent of LEAs are using one to four of the 11 research-based strategies that DESE provides for teacher retention. On average, an LEA uses 2.5 strategies.
- Some commonly used strategies include providing or increasing stipends for staff members, providing staff members with professional development opportunities, and utilizing culture and climate surveys to determine and address working condition issues.

EPP/CC Teacher Recruitment Grants

- EPPs and CCs are partnering with multiple LEAs to recruit teacher candidates.
- EPPs and CCs plan to use a variety of strategies for teacher recruitment and selection, including hosting informational events at LEA schools or EPP/CC campuses, using multiple communication platforms and materials, and providing secondary school students with school exploration classes.
- EPPs and CCs intend to utilize multiple strategies for teacher preparation and support, including connecting with students in teaching clubs or academies, providing professional development and mentoring services, establishing dual credit and dual enrollment opportunities, and providing scholarships for tuition or room and board.
- Most EPPs and CCs indicate they have specific strategies for recruiting male candidates and candidates of color. Among them, the majority are targeting both male candidates and candidates of color.
- EPPs and CCs plan to use a variety of strategies to increase teacher candidate diversity. As with the LEAs, some recruitment strategies are specific to creating a diverse pool of candidates; others are more general.

Evaluation

The majority of teacher recruitment and retention grantees plan to use mixed-methods approaches to evaluate their grant strategies. They intend to share their grant progress and/or outcome data with DESE and other stakeholders (e.g., school boards) on an on-going basis.

Conclusion

Through the Teacher Recruitment and Retention Grants, DESE is focusing on nurturing, recruiting, developing, and retaining teachers across the state. At this early phase, the planning is on track and the initiative is off to a positive start.